



ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS & HEALTH EFFECTS

Cancer Clusters

Historical Document

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For current information about cancer clusters, please visit
<http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/clusters/>

INVESTIGATIONS

CDC's Role in Investigating Cancer Clusters

From 1961 to 1982, CDC investigated 108 reported cancer clusters in 29 states and 5 foreign countries (Caldwell GG. Twenty-two years of cancer cluster investigations at the Centers for Disease Control. *Am J Epidemiol* 1990; 132[1]:S43-S47). The studies were begun in hopes of identifying a viral cause of cancer clusters. During these investigations, however, no clear cause was determined for any of the reported clusters.

A separate CDC investigation of a non-work-related cluster of Kaposi's sarcoma in the early 1980s did lead to the discovery of a cause. It was found that the vast majority of Kaposi's sarcoma cases developed in association with human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS).

On limited occasions, as illustrated by the following examples, CDC works with specific state health departments to address public health concerns about potential cancer clusters:

- > [Fallon, Nevada Exposure Assessment](#)
Detailed description of the CDC investigation into a significant increase in number of children diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia and acute myelocytic leukemia in Churchill County, Nevada in February 2001 ...[more](#)
- > [Sierra Vista, Arizona Childhood Leukemia Investigation](#)
Description and results of the CDC investigation into an elevated number of cases of childhood leukemia (acute lymphocytic leukemia [ALL] and acute myelocytic leukemia [AML]) in Sierra Vista, Arizona. ...[more](#)
- > Toms River, New Jersey [Childhood Cancer Incidence Update \(January 2003\)](#) [\[external link\]](#)
Updated report on the investigation conducted by the New Jersey Department of Health, in cooperation with the CDC, into a higher than expected number of cases of childhood cancer in Dover County, New Jersey.
 - [Childhood Cancer Incidence Summary \(September 1997\)](#) [\[external link\]](#)
Original detailed description of the investigation conducted by the New Jersey Department of Health, in cooperation with the CDC, into a higher than expected number of cases of childhood cancer in Dover County, New Jersey.
- > [Woburn, Massachusetts Childhood Leukemia Study](#) [\[external link\]](#)
Report of the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the CDC on the investigation of possible associations between the incidence of cancer and environmental hazards in Woburn for the period 1969-1978.